

Determine the time period that research data should be kept

A retention period represents the time span that an item will be kept. At the end of this period, the item should be appraised to decide if it is still needed or should be destroyed/transferred elsewhere

Many organisations specify retention requirements for research data:

- **London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine**

Research data must be kept for a minimum of 10 years following study completion, in accordance with the LSHTM Retention and Disposal Schedule. Research data typically only needs to be kept in one form - paper material may not be needed if the same information is held in digital form.

- **Research funders**

Many funders state research data must be kept for a minimum of 10 years following study completion, with some stating longer retention periods. The Medical Research Council (MRC) requires clinical and population health studies to be kept for 20+ years; whereas the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) require funded research to be "securely preserved for a minimum of 10-years after the data was last requested by a third party".

- **Journal publishers**

Many journals state that resources which underpin findings should be available openly or on request for a minimum of 10 years following the paper's publication.

- **UK legislation**

The UK Data Protection Act states that personal information contained in research data must be kept only for the time period necessary to fulfil the intended purpose.

- **Domain requirements**

The ICH Guideline for Good Clinical Practice states "Essential documents should be retained until at least 2 years after the last approval of a marketing application in an ICH region" or longer if required by regulatory requirements or sponsor agreement.

- **Data provider**

Secondary data are often covered by a licence agreement outlining its retention period, e.g. the duration of the PhD, after which it must be deleted.

Book an appointment

To discuss your data retention plan, contact the LSHTM Research Data Manager at researchdatamanagement@lshtm.ac.uk.